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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS MOST PREQUENTLY ASKED ABOUT THE DATA 20 VIDEO PAK

Q: Why is it that when I power up my VIC, the extra memory in the VIDEO PAK doesn't show in the bytes free message?

A: This is usually caused by the VIDEO PAK not being properly connected. The two areas to check are: the seating on the connector that is plugged into the VIC's expansion port, and the power supply. Is the A.C. adapter plugged in? Does the outlet work? Is the A.C. Adapter plugged in the right way into the VIDEO PAK (some of the earlier models required the connector to be inserted with the dot up)?

Q: When I type on the VIC's keyboard, all I get is some kind of strange garbage and of course, I can't enter the SYS command to bring up the VIDEO PAK. What causes this?

A: The shift lock key is depressed. The shift lock key MUST be in the out position to allow the VIC to accept any commands.

Q: I always leave the video cable connected to the VIDEO PAK, and sometimes when I try to bring it up, nothing happens. I noticed that when I move the video cable back to the VIC video output, only part of the SYS command was accepted. What causes this?

A: This is caused by typing a command before the VIC has a chance to com pletely perform its memory test. The cure for this problem is to wait before typing in the SYS command.
A memory test is always performed after the VIC is powered up so that it knows how much memory is present. The time it takes to do the test is related to how much memory is available; the more memory, the longer the test. It usually takes about three seconds to check 16K and about five seconds to check 24K.

Q: Sometimes when I am entering a command that uses quotes, like the LOAD command, the cursor control keys cause strange characters to appear within the quotes. Why?

A: The answer lies in a peculiarity of Commodore BASIC. All the keys on the VIC keyboard generate characters. Some, like the cursor keys, normally would not be displayed. When using quotes, the rules of the game change slightly. This is to allow you to do things like clear the screen and move the cursor around within PRINT statements. Unfortunately, the VIC only looks for quotes, not commands. As a result, many of the control keys print garbage when used in quotes in other commands. The only reliable way to avoid this problem is to not use the cursor control keys until after the quotes are closed. If you must backspace within quotes, use the delete key.

Q: Why does the picture on the monitor remain even after the VIC is turned off?

A: The video pak has its own video section that is powered by the A.C. adapter. Consequently, you must turn off the VIDEO PAK separately.

Q: Why is it that the VIDEO PAK locks up when you hit the RUN/STOP and RESTORE keys?

A: When you hit the RUN/STOP and RESTORE keys, this does what is called a "warm start." A warm start stops the program that is running, clears the 22 column screen and resets all the input and output devices, including the VIDEO PAK. In other words, the VIC is put in exactly the same condition that it would be in if you had just loaded a program after turning it on. To continue to use the VIDEO PAK, you will have to re-enter the appropriate SYS command for the number of columns that you are using.

Q: Why does the VIC sometimes lock up for not apparent reason?

A: There are two main reasons for this happening: static electricity and power problems. Static electricity is usually quite obvious, especially if your computer is shocking you all the time. We recommend that you use your computer in a low static environment. If you must use the computer in a high static environment, such as around thick carpets, treat the immediate area with an anti-static spray.

Power problems are much more elusive. The best way to deal with power problems is through prevention. Don't plug your computer into an outlet that is on the same circuit as a heavy motorized appliance such as an air conditioner or refrigerator. Also, you may want to consider the small investment in a transient supressor or voltage stabilizing transformer. Either of these items are readily available from local electronics dealers and will protect your computer from damage caused by power line disturbances as well as catastrophic events like lightning.

Q: Why doesn't my monitor or T.V. give me any picture after I move the video cable from the VIDEO PAK to the VIC?

A: You probably had this problem after you set the monitor or T.V. to give you a good picture while hooked up to the VIDEO PAK. The solution is to readjust the brightness and/or contrast to give the best picture on the VIC. The reason for the great difference is that the VIDEO PAK has a black and white output with much higher level than the VIC's color output.

Q: Can I use the 22 column screen and the 40/80 column screen at the same time? Also, can I use the sound with the 40/80 columns?

A:

The answer to both questions is yes! To use the 22 column video, you will have to poke the characters to the appropriate location (remember that memory is present, so the video locations change – see the Programmer's Reference Guide) or use the SYS commands to transfer control back and forth (see the user's manual). The sound output is not affected by use of the VIDEO PAK. The only thing to remember is that the sound output is only available at the output of the VIC, so you will have to hook the sound output up to a separate amplifier and speaker if you have your T.V. hooked up to the VIDEO PAK. A small amplifier with its own speaker, as well as all the cabling required, is available from your local Radio Shack for less than $20.